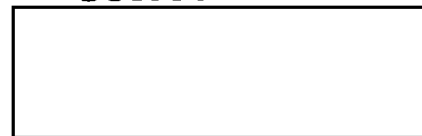


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Malaysia:

[redacted] a strong degree of uncertainty about impending changes in the hierarchy.

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It is still not clear when the prime minister, [redacted] intends to step down. [redacted]

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[redacted] Rahman has stated that he will not give up the premiership until internal order is fully restored. June has been his most frequently stated deadline for retirement, but he has also indicated November as a possible date. These uncertainties have contributed to the government's failure to solve its communal problems.

Another problem is whether to allow elections in Sarawak--suspended after the May 1969 disturbances. Government leaders are divided on the question, as there is a good chance that opposition elements would win a majority of seats in the state government. Elections are necessary, however, in both Sarawak and Sabah before parliamentary democracy can be restored in Kuala Lumpur. [redacted]

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USSR-Egypt: Friction between Egyptian military officers and their Soviet advisers has increased markedly since mid-1968 and is now widespread.

[redacted] the Soviets are accused of testing "new" ideas and doctrines that result in the loss of Egyptian soldiers, of giving nothing but negative criticism, and of denigrating the capabilities of Egyptian officers and men. The Egyptians also believe that by making critical remarks about the Russians, they can get into difficulty and even risk the loss of position or forced retirement.

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[redacted]
[redacted] The Egyptian leadership, however, cannot afford to allow these frictions to interfere with military operations or relations with the USSR.

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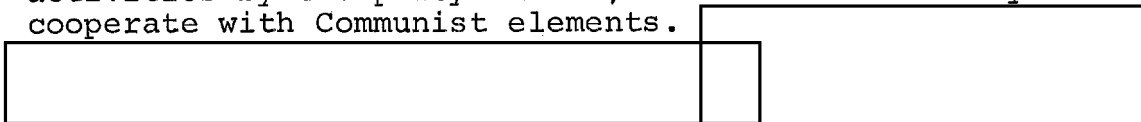
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Dominican Republic: The major opposition party's decision to abstain from the presidential election in May has further muddled the political situation.

The convention of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) also underscored the party's radicalization by approving leftist extremist resolutions, including solidarity with Cuba, by acclamation. The result probably leaves PRD moderates with no choice but to leave the party. Thus, despite the convention's united public stand, these events seem to be the harbinger of a party split and its eventual dissolution.

The decision will encourage antigovernment activities by the party cadres, some of whom already cooperate with Communist elements.



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Assuming, as all parties do, that President Balaguer will run again, the PRD's decision to abstain could spark a similar decision by the four other major opposition parties. They reportedly were meeting this week to demand that the government guarantee a free campaign or face withdrawal of their provisional decisions to participate. It seems more likely, however, that the remaining parties will stay in the race and try to get the potential bloc of PRD votes, which in 1966 was nearly 40 percent of the total.

Balaguer, although the unanimously nominated candidate of the governing party, continues to be silent on whether he will seek re-election. Partly because of this fact, the opposition has yet to mount an effective campaign.



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Soviet Exercise Preparations Under Way



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Laos: Communist forces are not pressing their advantage in the north. The Communists have limited their activities since the capture of the Plaine over a week ago to small probing attacks and other efforts directed at providing the current disposition of government forces. Given the limited number of enemy units involved in this activity and the logistical constraints the enemy now faces, it may be several more weeks before the Communists are ready to make a concerted move against government strongholds south and west of the Plaine. [REDACTED]

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Philippines: The march in Manila on 3 March in which up to 10,000 people took part was a protest against a police raid on a college campus last week. An attempt by about 1,000 radicals to converge on the US Embassy was thwarted by strong Philippine security forces, whose restrained handling of the demonstrators kept the number of injuries low. The students and other groups, nevertheless, are likely to continue their protests against both the government and the US. [REDACTED]

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USSR: Preparations are under way for a large exercise in the Belorussian SSR. Tass reported on 3 March that units taking part in the exercise--designated "Dvina"--are moving toward the maneuver area. Previous announcements suggested that it would be one of the largest ever held and would involve troops from all branches of service from several military districts. The maneuvers probably will consist of large tactical demonstrations, such as river crossings, airborne landings, and ground support exercises.

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[REDACTED] (Map)

(continued)

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Turkey: Prime Minister Demirel appears to have gathered nearly enough support to form a new majority government. He may not attempt to obtain a vote of confidence for another week or two, however, in the hope of widening his margin. The opposition, particularly Ismet Inonu, leader of the Republican People's Party, has begun a sharp attack on Demirel for procrastination and for alleged "corruption" in an effort to unseat him permanently. The political situation generally remains calm, but the longer the problem remains unsolved, the greater the loss of prestige for Demirel and loss of confidence in the parliamentary system.

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Cuba: This year's sugar harvest is falling farther behind schedule, although a record crop still seems possible. Statistics in the Cuban press indicate that the four-million-ton mark will not be reached until 5 March. On 28 February, the date by which four million tons were to have been produced, production stood at 3.75 million tons. A continuation of the wide range of problems prevalent in the three key sugar-producing provinces--Las Villas, Camaguey, and Oriente--would clearly preclude achievement of the highly-publicized harvest goal of ten million tons. If the spring rains begin as usual in early May, the shortfall could be great. In any event, however, production almost certainly will surpass the Castro regime's previous high of 6.8 million tons in 1961.

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Brazil: A struggle for control of the policy-making Brazilian Coffee Institute (IBC) has culminated in the recent resignation of the minister of industry and commerce, who stressed growers' interests exclusively. President Medici's appointment of a new minister and new senior IBC officials returns decisions on coffee policy to a faction headed by Finance Minister Delfim Neto. This faction is expected to take a more balanced and far-sighted approach to coffee policy than its predecessors. Conflicting interests between Brazil and its customers regarding coffee prices, however, promise to make negotiations difficult, at least in the short run.

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